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Nancy Wiener, 2014





Ι

PARVATI

Copper alloy
South India, Chola Dynasty
Late 12th – Early 13th century
Height: 34 inches (86.3 cm)
Provenance: Private Collection, USA
Doris Wiener Gallery, New York

The Chola dynasty ruled in southern India for nearly four centuries, beginning at the turn of the first millennia of the Common Era. Active patrons of the arts, the Cholas left behind a rich legacy of devotional artwork. Especially renowned today are the Chola period temple bronzes, in particular Hindu devotional icons, the fruit of an artistic tradition that reached its apex between the ninth through thirteenth centuries. The sensuous elegance for which the art of this period is so renowned is perfectly embodied in the figure of this late twelfth - early thirteenth century Parvati, consort of Shiva.

During the Chola period, temple bronzes fulfilled a unique religious function. While large, stone images of deities resided in the sacred inner chamber of a Hindu temple, smaller bronze icons served as utsavamurtis, or a deity's emissaries into the world outside the temple, whence they were taken in ritual processions throughout surrounding areas.¹

Described often in verse as the personification of sensual perfection, Parvati, or the great goddess Uma as she was known to the Cholas, played an integral role in medieval Indian religious life. Within temples, she appeared frequently alongside images of her husband, Shiva, creator and destroyer of the universe.² The benevolent incarnation of a multifaceted deity, Parvati is depicted here with a warm, serene countenance.

This bronze image of Parvati was created using the lost-wax process of casting. Because the act of casting the metal sculpture destroys the mold from which the figure is cast, no two Chola bronzes are ever identical. Nonetheless, they conform broadly to established iconographic standards. Thereby Parvati is depicted here in the conventional tribhanga pose, in which the three bends of her body lend her posture a fluid grace.

At once lush and delicate, this image of

Parvati displays the goddess' voluptuous body in contrast with the crisp, ornate refinement of the jewelry that adorns her. Her figure flows rhythmically between the bends of her tribhanga pose, hips swinging to one side while the energetic poise of her fingertips lends her whole posture a quiet vitality. The sinuous curves of Parvati's figure extend into three dimensions, cloaked with hanging strings of beads and the diaphanous folds of her cloth garments, sensitively rendered as it clings to her supple legs. A wide, tasseled belt is slung low across her hips, revealing the voluptuous contours of her stomach while its richly textured surface echoes that of the wide necklace that skims the goddess' bosom. A ritual cord curves between Parvati's full, bare breasts, and a tall, conical crown rests atop her head. Almond eyes wide, her full lips turn up gently in the slightest of smiles. Laden with stacks of bracelets and rings on every finger, Parvati is every inch the regal goddess. The sensual perfection of her form rendered here echoes the adoring tone of the seventh-century hymn describing the captivating goddess:

Fresh as newborn lotus buds, lustrous as kongu blossoms, honeyed like young coconuts, golden kalashas filled with the nectar of the gods, are the breasts of the resplendent Uma.³

- r Dehejia, Vidya, and Royal Academy of Arts (Great Britain). Chola: Sacred Bronzes of Southern India. London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2006, p. 12.
- 2 Vidya Dehejia. The Sensuous and the Sacred: Chola Bronzes from South India. New York: American Federation of Arts in association with the University of Washington Press (2002), p. 122.
- 3 Sambandar, Hymn 260, 4, in Dehejia, Slaves of the Lord: The Path of the Tamil Saints, Delhi, 1988, p. 44.





GREEN TARA, SHAKYAMUNI, AND ACHALA

Pigment on Wood
Tibet

Late 11th – early 12th century Height: 8 ¼ x 26 1/8 inches (21 x 66.3 cm) This stunning Tibetan book cover is a work of art that is painted on both the inside and outside faces. It once protected a Tibetan manuscript, one of a pair of wooden covers that were placed above and below a double-sided stack of paper (which was often wrapped in fabric), the whole package secured by a leather strap that wrapped around and fastened with a metal buckle.

Tibetan book covers are usually made of wood, a precious substance in and of itself on the 12,000-foot high, virtually tree-less plateau of central Tibet. At the time this book cover was created, wood was used at great cost, as it had to be carried over vertiginous passes from southern and southeastern Tibet and surrounding areas in India, Nepal, and Bhutan.

Depicted on the inside face of this book cover are three Buddhist deities, beautiful renditions of these gods that would only have been seen by the person reading the book. The central deity, the most important, is Green Tara, the compassionate savioress. She sits with her head cocked, as if listening for the pleas of the devoted, her hand extended with the palm up in the gesture of gift-bestowal. Her other hand holds her typical flower, a blue water lily with long petals, depicted here half-closed following the descriptions of Green Tara's appearance found in Sanskrit texts. Another blue lily blooms beside her.

Green Tara is flanked by two deities

- Shakyamuni Buddha on the left and the
wrathful deity Achala on the right. The
transcendent nature of all three is indicated by
their lotus supports. Shakyamuni, the historical
Buddha, wears the robes of a monk and makes
the gesture of teaching. A blue fabric-covered
cushion can be seen behind him. Achala, whose
name means "Immovable One," wields a sword
and a noose as his weapons to help the faithful
combat internal and external obstacles to

enlightenment. The hand that holds the noose also makes the gesture of threatening with a raised index finger held at the level of the heart. Flames rise in the arch behind him, a detail that follows this wrathful deity's description in texts, which characterize him as standing in the middle of a blazing fire.

The outer face of this book cover has painted decoration that mimics a style of carved and painted book covers that were particularly popular in Tibet in the 12th-15th centuries. The interrelations between the many book covers in this style have yet to be worked out, but the type of decoration on all is similar to a late 11th-early 12th century book cover that has an inscription noting that its painting was done in the "Indian style."

Three deities, each the center of a roundel, also adorned this face of the book cover, although two have been lost and only part of the central deity remains. The arm positions and remains of a sack suggest that this figure is Jambhala, the god of wealth. Also extant are a pair of eyes in the halfroundel at the far left, which suggest that kirtimukhas once graced these areas at either end of the central rectangle. Each element of the design is outlined by closely placed circles that represent a row of pearls, an ancient decorative device that dates back to at least Sassanian times (3rd – 7th century). The broad outer frame was originally filled with scrolling green foliage set against a red background, a stylistic element commonly found on covers in this style. The target-like concentric circles that float in a red background on both faces derive from symbols on Indian manuscripts that marked the end of chapters.







LARGE CEREMONIAL NECKLACE

Silver with ruby cabochons and cotton South India, Tamil Nadu circa 19th century Length: 88 inches (223.5 cm) Individual segments: 6 ¼ x 1 ½ inches (16 x 3.9 cm) Provenance: Private Collection, Europe In South Indian devotional sculpture the Hindu deities' animal mounts are often as elaborately adorned as the gods who ride them. This impressive necklace would have encircled the neck of a large-scale sculpture of Nandi, the bull traditionally associated with Shiva. Nandi is often depicted with Shiva and Parvati, mounted either individually or together, or he may appear alone as a figure worthy of ceremonial devotion by virtue of his affiliation with the gods. To mark his elevated status Nandi is adorned within the sculpture itself, or with separately added jewelry.

This striking necklace is similar to a Malligai Arumbu Malai, or Jasmine Bud Necklace, called such because each element resembles the spiky bud of the Arabian jasmine flower (jasminium sambac). Here, the necklace is comprised of twenty-nine silver segments connected by a braided black rope and arranged in a sunburst circle. Each segment includes a rounded base with a conical spire finishing in a knob at the tip. The rounded elements resemble dried rudraksha seeds, literally the "tears of Shiva," which are traditionally strung together for use in Hindu prayer. The raised design on each suggests an individual kirtimukha, or face of glory, also traditionally associated with Shiva. A ruby cabochon forms the mouth, while the eyes, nose and cheeks complete the face in silver with the spire as an extended tongue. A ridge of rounded and pointed protrusions runs along the central portion of the face, leaving two smooth sections for the kirtimukha's puffed cheeks. Two additional rings flanking each face appear as ears and serve as the transition from 102, fig. 145 and p. 103, fig. 146. one segment to the next.

For a smaller related example, see Nelson Atkins Museum, Kansas City.

For a bronze figure of Nandi with sculpted ornaments, see Vidya Dehejia, Chola: Sacred Bronzes of Southern India (London:



Royal Academy of Arts, 2006), p. 73, cat. no. 8. Hindu sculptures of deities are adorned with separately added jewelry, garlands, textiles, and silks in preparation for festival processions, which are of particular importance in South India. For a discussion of South Indian processions, including photographs of elaborately adorned processional sculptures, see Richard H. Davis, "Chola Bronzes in Procession," in The Sensuous and the Sacred: Chola Bronzes from South India, Vidya Dehejia (New York: American Federation of Arts, 2002),

For examples of Malligai Arumbu Malai, see Usha R. Bala Krishnan and Meera Sushil Kumar, Dance of the Peacock: Jewellery Traditions of India (Bombay: India Book House, Ltd., 1999), p.



KNEELING MALE FIGURE

Bronze with traces of gilding
Khmer, Angkor period
Baphuon style
Late 11th century
Height: 9 inches (30 cm)
Exhibited: Metropolitan Museum of Art,

Published: Bunker, Khmer Bronzes: New Interpretations of the Past, (Chicago: Art Media Resources, 2011), p. 234, 236, fig. 7.14 Provenance: Private Collection, USA The Baphuon style is so named for the eleventh century temple located in the Angkor Thom complex in Cambodia. Classical sculpture of the Baphuon period is characterized by its subtlety of form and restrained sensuality, and is regarded by many to be the apogee of Khmer artistic achievement.

This bronze, though smaller in size, relates closely to a discrete group of important late eleventh century bronze figures that all share distinctive characteristics. Sculptures from this group are held by the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Cleveland Museum of Art, among others. The largest of which is the famous monumental reclining Vishnu in the collection of the National Museum of Cambodia, Phnom Penh. All display similar facial features, garment arrangements, and body proportions.

Sensitively modeled and solidly cast, this superb male figure kneels on his left knee with his right knee lifted. His arms are relaxed at his sides, the left hand with fingers extended rests on the thigh, and the right wrist is held on the raised knee. He wears a pleated sampot (skirt) fitted around the hips, its upper border flush against his form to accentuate the sleek, upright torso, revealing the detailed belt with jeweled pendants that encircles his waist. Delicately incised patterns decorate the sampot's individual folds. His nude upper body is adorned with a necklace with a central chan flower rosette, armlets and bracelets. The face, probably originally inlaid with silver and obsidian, displays the classic Baphuon inward smile and meditative gaze. Small fittings around the top of the head suggest a separately cast chignon had been placed there, as well as a notch in the back where the butterfly bow would have been attached. Traces of gilding can be seen throughout.

Though the identity of this sculpture



is unknown, his kneeling posture, elaborate jewelry and remaining gilding suggests a royal donor portrait, which is also supported by its relationship to the other bronzes from this group. This beautiful image, simultaneously powerful and humble embodies the melding of divine and human, god and patron, all of which are the hallmarks of great Khmer sculpture.

I Martin Lerner in Felten and Lerner, M; THAI AND CAMBODIAN SCULPTURE, London, 1989, pp. 229-30.



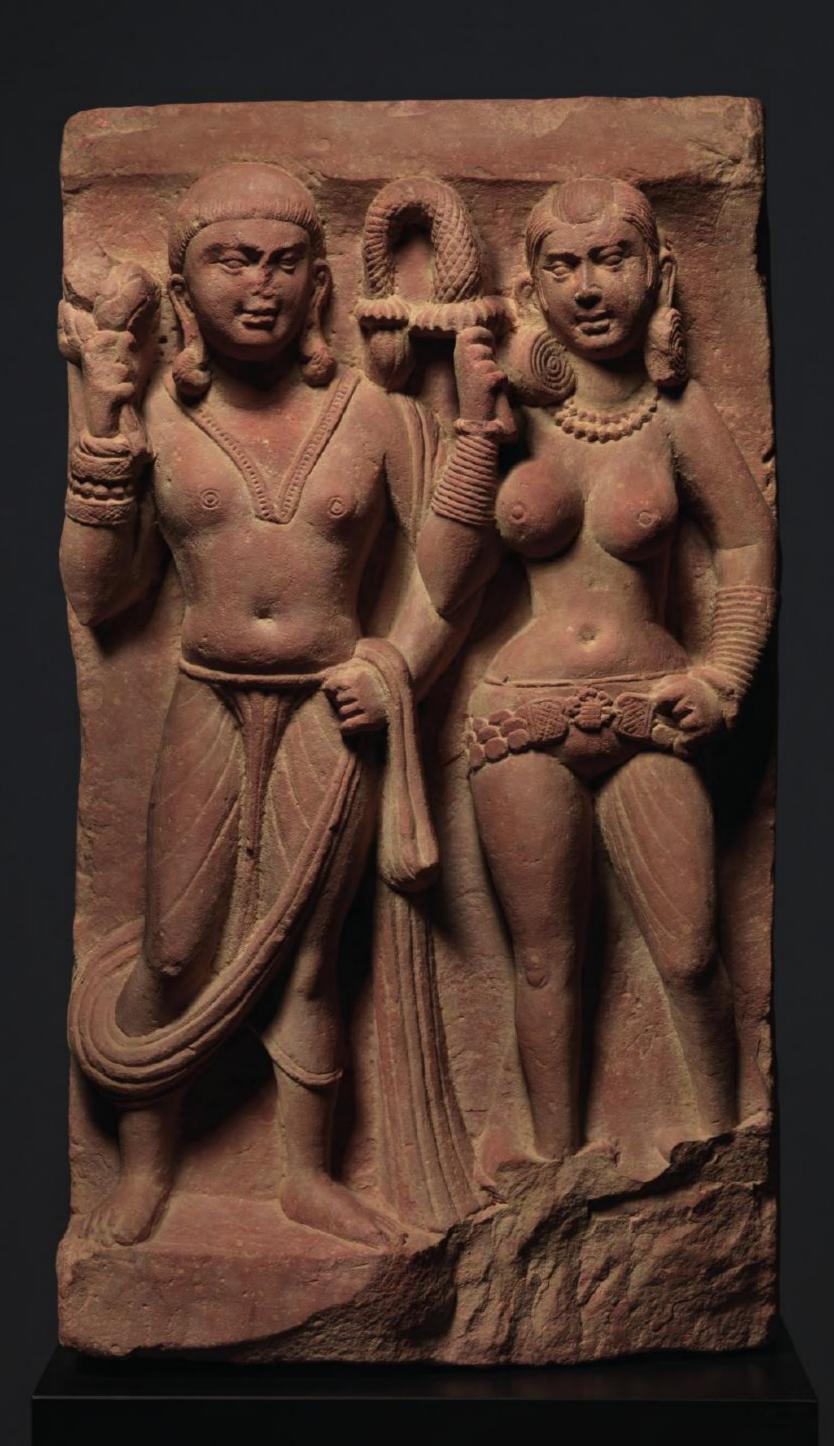
MITHUNA

Red sandstone
India, Mathura
Kushan period,
circa 1st – 2nd century A.D.
Height: 25 ¾ inches (65.4 cm)
Provenance:
Doris Wiener Gallery, New York

Since ancient times, one of the enduring traditions in Indian sculpture is the representation of loving couples. In the Kushan period (circa 30 to 375 AD), Mithunas, symbols of abundance, were placed around the outer perimeter of religious structures and were believed to confer blessings on the devotee as they entered the sanctuary, while preserving the auspicious character of the space within. Often depicted in a frontal pose, they are seen on surviving doorjambs, plinths, and similar structures marking the entrance to the sacred space.

Standing in the classical tribhanga (three bend) pose with arms touching, the figures mirror each other's actions. Their bodies, fully and sensuously formed, are filled with prana, the sacred breath that connects them to the earth and to the heavens. Each holds a hand to the hip. In their upraised hands, the male holds three lotus buds, and the female, a banana flower. The female wears heavy jewelry, including earrings, bracelets, a double stranded necklace, a mekhala (belt), composed of multiple strands of pearls, and large ankle ornaments. Between her ankles and at the waist, the thin line of her close-fitting, diaphanous dhoti (skirt) is visible. The male figure, also adorned with a necklace, bracelets and earrings, wears a pleated dhoti that ends at the shin. A long scarf, wrapped around one shoulder, loops around his lower legs, and drapes over his wrist to end next to his proper right leg. Their expressions are joyful, reinforcing the harmony of their complimentary postures.





KRISHNA FLUTING

Attributed to Faizullah Opaque pigments heightened with gold on paper India

> Mughal style at Lucknow circa 1775

Image: 15 1/8 x 10 3/8 inches (38.4 x 26.3 cm) Folio: 17 1/2 x 12 3/8 inches (44.4 x 31.4 cm) Published: Ehnbom, Indian Miniatures: The Ehrenfeld Collection, New York, 1985, p. 82 cat. 33 Provenance: Private collection, Germany

Ehrenfeld collection Doris Wiener Gallery, New York In the Hindu tradition, the god Krishna is often worshipped and portrayed in art as well as literature, in the form of Gopala, the cowherd boy. Rich narratives chronicle the upbringing of Krishna, who is described in texts such as the Harivamsa and Bhagavata Purana as a mischievous child who grows into rapport with the gopis, the daughters and wives of the cowherds. In fact, the love and amorous attention bestowed upon Krishna by the gopis

an adventuresome youth, dashing and reckless. Krishna Gopala is especially known for his fabled has come to serve as an exemplary model of

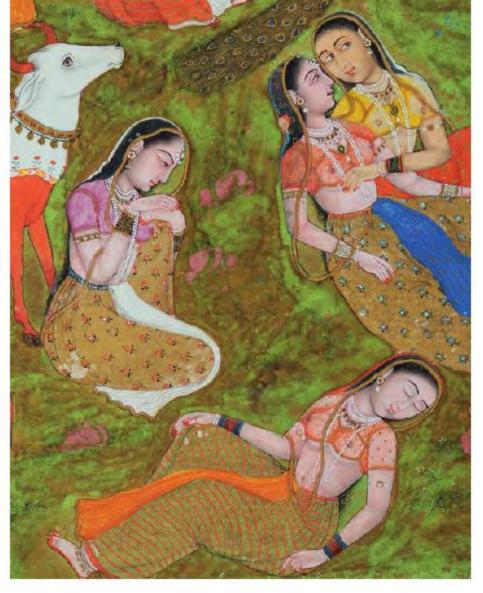
religious fervor for Hindu devotees.

In the 18th century, as Delhi declined, Lucknow emerged as a prominent cultural center. With the new patrons, the arts flourished amidst a heady blend of stylistic influences. In this painting, inscribed: amal Faisulla, (work of Faisulla), we see Krishna as a young cowherd, playing his flute. This work, warm with rich, red hues, is an example of the eclectic art of Lucknow in the late eighteenth century.

At Lucknow, the late Mughal style, with its roots in Persian Islam, was adapted to Hindu subjects, and colored by European art imported by the English. In this painting in particular, we see the Mughal style, with its heavy shading and its gem-like details, rendered in a receding pictorial space, borrowed from European models, all in the service of a popular Hindu narrative.

In the painting, lilac-skinned Krishna is a model of youthful carelessness, seemingly oblivious to the admirers attracted by his fluting. His figure is exquisitely rendered, and in his yellow dhoti, he seems to glow against the green pasture that surrounds him. He stands, in narrative as in composition, the central figure of the scene, around which his admirers have eagerly flocked.

The cowherds, their charges, and even the peafowl are enraptured by his playing, and several of the gopis lie in the grass, overcome by the music that flows from the divine youth, who is at once musician and lover. In the distance, more cows graze on the outskirts of the domed city. The sky is a brilliant blue streaked with orange clouds, as if to suggest a fiery sunset. Like the adoring gopis, bearing their gifts and garlands, we are drawn into the scene, straining to hear the music of Krishna's song.





KRISHNA AND THE GOPAS ENTER UGRASURA'S MOUTH

An illustration to the "Fifth" or "Large" Bhagavata Purana

Attributed to Manaku and Fattu Opaque pigments heightened with gold on paper Basoli-Guler style

circa 1760 – 65 AD

Painting: 9 ¼ x 13 inches (23.5 x 33.2 cm) Folio: 11 5/8 x 16 inches (29.5 x 40.2 cm) Provenance:

> Mrs. F.C. Smith, Sotheby's, London, 1 February 1960, Lot 8

The Bhagavata Purana, or "Ancient Stories of the Lord", is a text compiled in Southern India during the tenth century. It chronicles the youthful exploits of the Hindu god Krishna in some 18,000 stanzas divided into twelve books. Books Ten and Eleven have attained special popularity and renown. They tell of Krishna's birth under the shadow of evil king Kamsa, his mischievous childhood and the adventures of his adolescence. Among these are a series of episodes in which Kamsa sends demons to destroy Krishna, who is foretold will destroy him. These are among the most celebrated devotional art works of the young god.

This painting illustrates one such episode. As B. N. Goswamy relates: "Among the demons dispatched by Kamsa for killing Krishna was also [Ugrasura]... This demon assumed the form of a giant serpent, and lay himself on the usual path of Krishna and his companions as they entered the forest. So enormous was he, the text says, that when he opened his vale-like mouth, his "lower lip lay on the earth, while the upper lip touched the clouds"; his fangs appeared like summits of mountains and his tongue like a broad road."

This extraordinary painting belongs to the important 'Fifth" or "Large" Bhagavata Purana series. In it we see characteristics of Basohli art, colored by "Mughal" influence from Guler: a hybrid style employed to extraordinary effect. The spare but dynamic composition pits vast, un-modulated swaths of color against one another, creating contrasts that thrum with palpable electricity. A shocking intensity characterizes the painting's abrupt tonal transitions: a gold sky abuts the pale pink of the snake demon, his snowy underbelly clashes with the spring green of the foreground, it in turn jars as it meets the olive of the forest. The glowing intensity of the planes of color, typical of Basohli painting, stands in contrast

to the painting's sensitive attention to detail (more Mughal). The figures entering the demon's mouth, especially that of Krishna, the right-most figure, are rendered with an utmost attention to detail, especially evident in the treatment of the cowherds' jewelry, and Krishna's garments and crown. The painting is static, but throbs with energy.

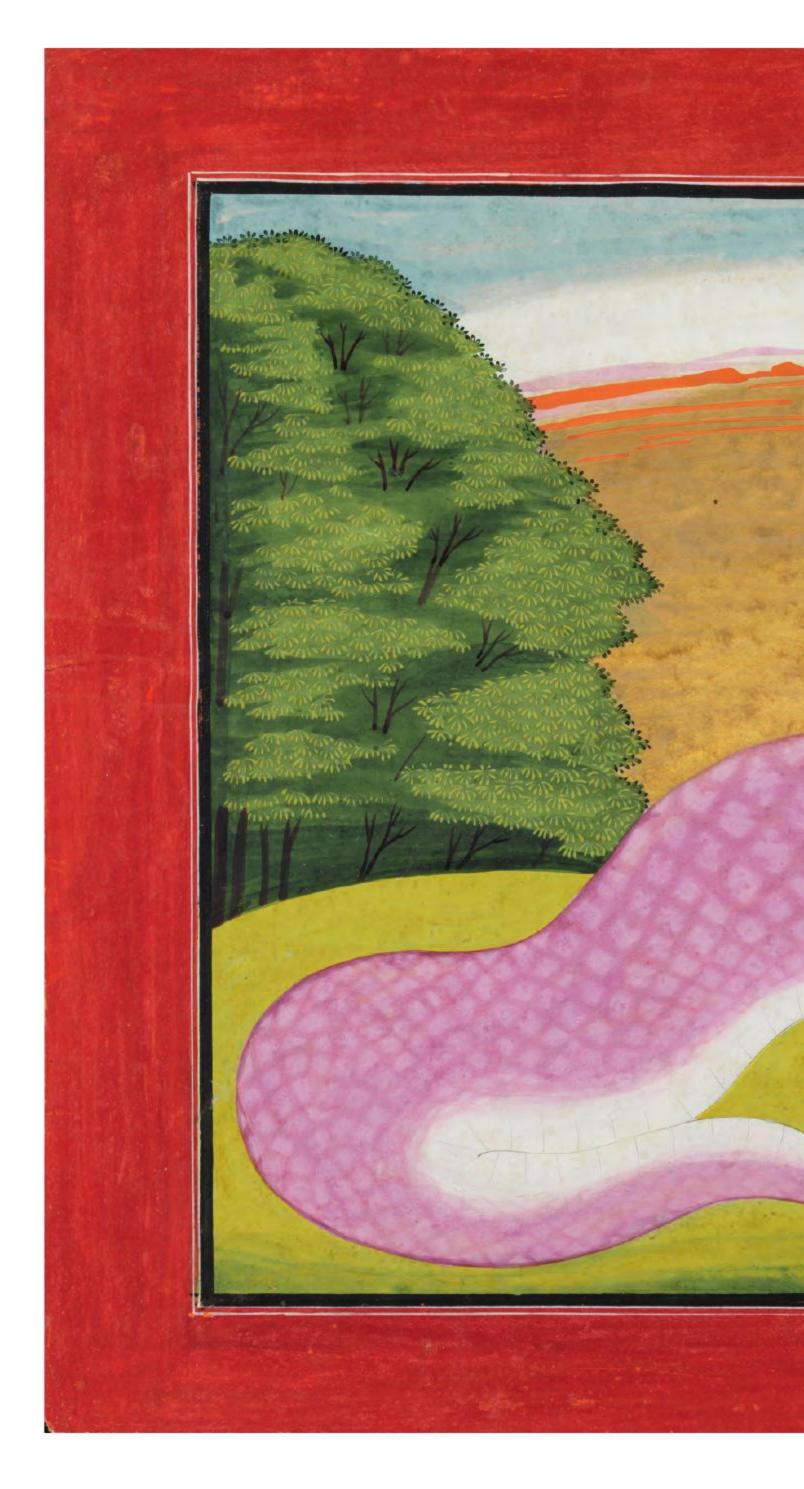
Now dispersed among museums and private collections world-wide, there is much discussion regarding the artists who produced it. Though opinions vary as to whether the series was painted by Manaku, Fattu and perhaps Nainsukh, this series remains a seminal illustration of Pahari painting and an example of the cross-pollination of Basohli and Mughal influence on the developing styles of Guler and Kangra, widely discussed in the literature surrounding this period.

For further reading see:

W.G. Archer (1973, vol. 1, pp. 49-51, vol. 2, pp. 36-39), Goswamy and Fischer (1992, p. 314), Mason, (2001, pp. 188-9) (Archer 1976, nos. 8-10), the V & A Museum (Archer 1973, vol. 1, pp, 49-50, vol. 2, pp. 36-38), the British Library (Falk and Archer 1981, no. 543), the former Ehrenfeld collection (Ehnbom 1985, no. 112), the Binney collection in San Diego (Goswamy and Smith 2005, nos. 93-94), the Philadelphia Museum (Kramrisch 1986, nos. 102-04), the Cleveland Museum (Leach 1986, no. 106i-iv), the Bellak collection (Mason 2001, no. 80), and the Brooklyn Museum (Poster et al. 1994, no. 193).

I Goswamy, B. N, Bhatia, and Lalit Kala Akademi. Painted Visions: The Goenka Collection of Indian Paintings. New Delhi: Lalit Kala Akademi, 1999.







BHUMPA

circa 16th – 17th century Late Ming Dynasty (Vessel) Height: 11.9 inches (30 cm)

Rock crystal and gilt copper The clear rock crystal Bhumpa, or ceremonial water jug, seen here is an historically important Sino-Himalayan amalgam of late Ming dynasty carving and Nepalese metalworking. The stone is bright and clear carved with the distinctive Ming motif of serpentine chi-hu dragons seen here encircling the vessel as if to protect the base. The gilt copper metalwork and rock crystal neck was likely added by Newari artists from Nepal in the sixteenth century. Though its original purpose is unknown, its adaptation from a secular vessel into a ritual object suggests its importance as an object, and speaks to the direct relationship between the Newari's and the Ming Chinese.







circa 10th century Height: 10 inches (25.4 cm)

9

Sandstone Carved out of pink sandstone, this beautiful India, Medieval period Vyala from the tenth century captures the enchanting demeanor of these revered mythical beasts. With an elegantly arched neck veiled in a curling mane and woven collar, his upward gazing eyes and broad snout reveal an open teeth-lined mouth. Part feline, bird, serpent and sometimes elephant, Vyala's are considered more powerful than earthly animals, serving as guardians of the gods and goddesses of Hinduism.

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EARRINGS

circa 19th century Length: 2 3/4 inches (6.9 cm)

Gold Jewelry is one of the primary symbols of Indonesia, Flores affluence and prestige among the Nage people of Flores Island, Indonesia. Symbolic of fertility and abundance, naturalistic forms, such as this delicate pair of leaf-shaped earrings known as

wea wunu wona, which literally translates to "swinging leaves gold earrings", were frequently presented to a young woman as a declaration of engagement by her future husband.



II

KRISHNA SLAYS NIKUMBHA AND RESCUES ARJUNA

India, Kangra or Guler circa 1800 - 1820 Image: 12 5/8 x 16 7/8 inches (32.1 x 43 cm) Folio: 14 1/4 x 18 1/2 inches (36.2 x 47 cm) Provenance: Royal Library of Mandi, 1969

An illustration to the Harivamsha From the celebrated series by the master Attributed to Purkhu painter of the late Kangra period, Purkhu: This Opaque pigments heightened with gold on paper climactic scene from the Harivamsha depicts an episode in which the demon king Nikumbha, upon whom Brahma has bestowed immortality subject only to the action of Krishna, attempts a deception by creating thousands of copies of himself.

> Then, O the lord of men!, Immediately, (Krishna) saw ten thousand thousands of Nikumbhas on the earth, sky and all over.

The slayer of Madhu (Krishna) realized the true form of Nikumbha, who created hundreds of illusions, the one who took away the one, born under the star of Phalguni (Arjuna).

Thousands (of Nikumbha-s) fought with Krishna, O the oppressor of enemies!

Thousands fought with the son of Pritha (Arjuna) and thousands fought with the valiant son of Rukmini, Pradyumna. This was a wonder.

Some of the great demons (nikumbha-s) held the bow of (arjuna), some others held his hand, some other great demons held his feet.

The slayer of demons (Krishna), the lord of the past, present and future cut off his head as seen by the entire physical beings of the world.

O the one of bharata race! As his head was cut off, he released the one, born under the star of phalguni (arjuna). The chief of demons fell down like a tree whose roots are cut off.1

Krishna, the omniscient one, sees through the deception. In a fierce battle he beheads Nikumbha with his discus, the Sudarshana Chakra, and rescues Arjuna from the demon's clutches. After which, Arjuna is lowered with great tenderness into Pradyumna's waiting arms. The scope of the painting is almost

cinematic in its portrayal of these dramatic events from the Mahabharata. It is the motion of the figures and the dynamic depiction of Nikumbha's demise that lend the painting its narrative flair and dramatic signature.

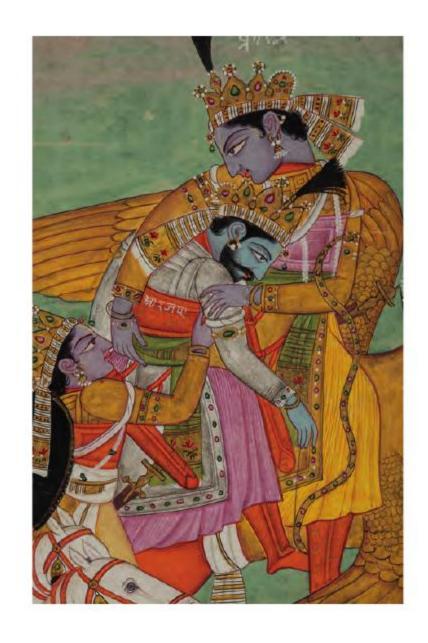
This painting numbered 44 on the reverse, is next in the sequence of paintings from the same series published in Del Bonta, R, 2103, p.58 pl. 24.

1 Chapter 90 of the Harivamsha by Desiraju Hanumanta Rao, see online:

http://Mahabharata.resources.org/harivamsa/ vishnuparva/hv_2_090.htm









THE DEFEAT OF LANKA

Attributed to the Kotah Master Opaque pigments heightened with gold and silver on paper Image: 13 1/2 x 9 1/2 inches (34 x 23.5 cm) Provenance: Ramayana.

Private collection, Germany Paul Walter collection, New York Doris Wiener Gallery, New York

Illustration From The Ramayana

This painting shows a critical scene from the Ramayana: the defeat of Ravana, King of Lanka. The vivid colors of the painting illustrate in vibrant red and gold the dramatic passage from India, Bundi/Kotah the popular Hindu epic. In a fascinating time circa 1710 - 1720 shift, the painter has cleverly combined two separate scenes from the final chapter of the

Here, Rama's monkey and bear armies are shown attacking the giant demon Kumbhakarna, a brother of Ravana whom Brahma had cursed to eternal sleep. Needing the giant's assistance in fighting Rama, Ravana appeals the sentence and Brahma allows Kumbhakarna to awake for one day. The monkey generals Hanuman and Sugriva lead the fatal attack on the giant, who faces the viewer in an enigmatic posture of defeat and departure from this world.

After Kumbhakarna's inevitable defeat at the hands of Rama and his armies, Ravana appears on the battlefield. Clad in golden armor, he storms out of Lanka on his golden chariot pulled by eight white horses. Lakshamana and Vighisana shoot down his chariot and kill his horses, and the felled Ravana appears inverted at the feet of Lakshmana.

For a folio from the same series see: Rietberg Museum, Horst Metzger, Coll: Rama, Lakshmana und die Affen besiegen Ravana.



HEAD OF AVALORITES VARA

Black stone Often referred to as the "golden era of Bengal", India the Pala dynasty and its artistic tradition Pala Period flourished in Eastern India from the eight to circa 11th century the twelfth century. Developed out of the late Height: 9 ½ inches (24 cm) Gupta style, Pala sculpture is known for its sensuous and ornate form. This magnificent head of Avalokitesvara, "The Lord who looks down", is the embodiment of pure compassion. Elegantly modeled out of black stone, his elongated nose, delicate eyes and full lips, create an expression of serene contemplation. An elaborate headdress gives rise to a topknot of cascading loops of hair, with one of the five Dhyani Buddhas meditating at the center. The overall impact is one of regal elegance and reserved dignity, hallmarks of Pala artistic style.



VAJRASATTVA

Peninsular Thailand circa 8th – 9th century Height: 8 x 4 inches (20 x 10 cm) Provenance: Private Collection, USA The history of Srivijaya, a Buddhist kingdom that held sway in the southern part of Southeast Asia from the seventh to the thirteenth century, was intricately tied to its status as a major cosmopolitan center with close connections to India and China. An important hub of trans peninsular trade, and a powerful maritime state, Srivijaya once encompassed modern-day southern Thailand, Malaysia, and the Indonesian island of Sumatra. As part of a global network, Srivijaya was, at the height of its prominence, a frequent destination for pilgrims and intellectuals from India and China.¹

Little is known about sculpture of the Srivijaya period. Images such as this one, from Peninsular Thailand have traditionally been assigned a Srivijaya provenance. However, bronze sculpture in this style have been found throughout Southeast Asia.

The figure of Vajrasattva reflects the Buddhist belief in a class of spiritual leaders known as Bodhisattvas, or those whose sattva (essence), is bodhi (spiritual wisdom).² These saviors, or spiritual guides, are figures who have achieved enlightenment, but choose to persist in the phenomenal world in order to aid others on their spiritual journeys. In sculptural depictions, Bodhisattvas can usually be differentiated from the Buddha by their rich adornment and heavy jewelry.

In this depiction of Vajrasattva, a lithe figure sits cross-legged on a lotus base, and is crowned by an umbrella-like canopy that denotes spiritual achievement and eminence. A solid, nearly-circular aureole, ringed with flames, frames the seated figure. Necklaces hang around the Bodhisattva's neck, and bracelets circle his wrists and arms. In his right hand he holds a vajra, a ritual object used in Buddhist ceremonies that is thought to dispel passion and desire. In his left hand, placed on his hip, he holds a small bell. The figure overall

is willowy and energetic, the opposing bends of his arms and the movement of his torso lending the composition dynamic animation uncommon in works of this size.

Vajrasattva's face is serene but energetic. Almond eyes gaze down with incised pupils, under a brow rendered by a single, flexing line. Hair swept up into a topknot is depicted as a mass of tiny snail curls, and loose, stylized tresses fall down upon his shoulders. Nestled among the curls above his forehead and sides of his head are four Tathagatas Buddhas, (the fifth, in the back of the head, is most likely obscured by patina) also seated in lotus pose. The statue stands eight inches high, and its size and frontal orientation suggests it might have been displayed in a small niche or a domestic shrine for personal veneration.

For its small size, the bronze conveys incredible energy, grace, and vigorous detail.

I Subhadradis Diskul, Unesco, and Advisory Committee for the Study of Malay Culture. The Art of Srivijaya. Kuala Lumpur; New York; Paris: Oxford University Press; UNESCO, 1980, p. 9.

2 Leidy, Denise Patry. The Art of Buddhism: An Introduction to Its History & Meaning. Boston: Shambhala: Distributed in the United States by Random House, 2008, p. 32.



TODI RAGINI

Opaque pigments heightened with gold on paper India, Late Mughal Second half of the 18th century Image: 9 ¼ x 5 ¾ inches (23.5 x 14.6 cm) Folio: 17 x 12 ¼ inches (43 x 31 cm)

This exquisitely painted Todi Ragini, a feminine counterpart to the Vasant Ragas (a spring time melodic composition used in classical Indian music) portrays a princess listening to music against a tree. The musician, the princess's attendants and a small group of deer complete the intimate scene. The softly curved brushstrokes in the hilly background and sensuously muted palate create a tender and dreamy ambiance, alluding to the princess's longing for her absent lover.









PRAJNAPARAMITA

Gray sandstone
Khmer Dynasty, Angkor period
Baphuon style
11th century
Height: 25 ½ inches (64.8 cm)
Provenance: Private Collection, USA

Prajnaparamita, perhaps the most important female Buddhist deity, is the embodiment of the Buddhist sutra of the same name. Known as the Goddess of Transcendent Wisdom, she is the Mother of All Buddhas.

In Sanskrit, prajna means wisdom.

Paramita has several meanings; a task perfectly accomplished" more profoundly, the separation from suffering and the attainment of bliss as well as "arrived on the other shore": by passing through the sea of suffering, one arrives on the shore of Nirvana"

In the Sutra of 8,000 Verses she is described as:

"She is worthy of worship. In her we find refuge. She brings us safely under the wings of enlightenment. She is omniscience. Emptiness is her characteristic. She is the mother of the bodhisattvas. She is the perfect wisdom of the Buddhas. She turns the wheel of the dharma."

This luminous image of Prajnaparamita from the eleventh century greets the viewer with benign serenity. Bearing the blissful facial expression of supreme enlightenment, her enigmatic smile echoed in her winged eyebrows, radiates the winsome calm seen often in Baphuon period sculpture. Her hair is arranged in braided rows incised into the stone and culminates in a jatamukuta, a conical chignon, surmounted by a figure of Amitabha Buddha at the center. The fine, polished stone enhances her sensually modeled bare upper torso, which provides a contrast to her pleated ankle length sampot. A belt, slung low on her hips, holds a decoratively folded element sometimes called a fishtail or anchor, which flows down the center terminating in a

decorative swoop at her ankles.

In the Heart Sutra, Prajnaparamita is the Perfection of Wisdom:

The Bodhisattvas rely on the Perfection of Wisdom, and so with no delusions, they feel no fear, and have Nirvana here and now.

All the Buddhas, past, present, and future, rely on the Perfection of Wisdom, and live in full enlightenment.

The Perfection of Wisdom is the greatest mantra. It is the clearest mantra, the highest mantra, the mantra that removes all suffering.

This is truth that cannot be doubted. Say it so:

Gaté, gaté, paragaté, parasamgaté. Bodhi! Svaha!

Gone, gone, gone over, gone fully over. Awakened! So be it!

- 1 http://www2.fodian.net/world/ps.vajra.02.020503.screen. pdf
- 2 From the Sutra of 8,000 Verses, in Tom Lowenstein, The Vision of the Buddha (New York: Little, Brown and Co.,1996), p. 65.



HEAD OF A BODHISATTVA

Dark gray schist Ancient Gandhara Region circa 2nd – 3rd century AD Height: 14 inches (35.5 cm) The second to third centuries of the Common Era marked the apogee of the Golden Age of the ancient Kingdom of Gandhara, a time when human representations of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas bearing unmistakable Greco-Bactrian characteristics would become the enduring foundation of Buddhist iconography to emerge from this important moment in the classical period of Buddhist art history.

The Kingdom of Gandhara, led by the powerful Buddhist kings and nobility of the Kushan dynasty, was well situated to capitalize on the lucrative commercial trade that traversed its vast region by way of the uttarapatha (the Northern trunk road), a major artery of the fabled Silk Road that facilitated the movement of goods, foreign ideas, and nomadic traders from the Hellenized Orient to the west, the steppes of Central Asia to the north, and from China to the east.

The Ganadharan region itself was vast, territorially encompassing northern India, what is now Pakistan, the steppes of Central Asia, and much of present-day Afghanistan. The Kushan Dynasty was enriched by its position in intraregional trade as it absorbed the cultural influences of its Greco-Bactrian and even Parthian precedents. The kingdom's economic strength was in turn matched by a military prowess on par with the armies of China, Iran, and India. The material wealth and cosmopolitanism of the kingdom is deeply inflected in the richness of its artistic expression, as regional artisans produced an extraordinary output of classically distinguished pieces for the Kushan nobility.

The Buddhist art within the Kushan dynasty is immediately recognizable for its varied influences, particularly in its representations of the Buddha and the Bodhisattvas Maitreya (the Future Buddha) and Avalokitesvara (the Buddha of Compassion). These images of the Bodhisattva, too, as part of the Mahayana tradition (the Greater Vehicle), represented an important development in the iconography of Buddhist art, as Bodhisattva veneration would inform the foundations of the kind of Buddhism that spread further into the Far East and into the Himalayan region.

This remarkable example of Gandharan sculpture, richly executed in dark grey schist, combines the naturalism of the classical Greek style with the tranquility of Buddhist art. In addition to the fine shaping of the face, including the classically aquiline nose, this piece features an elaborate coiffure that radiates from the top of the head and is fashioned in a loosely parted topknot. The locks overflow a finely beaded diadem. The hair is at once animated and sensual, and it has been styled in such a way as to accentuate his princely status. The gemstone adornment that crowns the center of the diadem, and the heavy rings that hang from the elongated earlobes, symbolize the Bodhisattva's earthly return in the service of the enlightenment of all sentient beings. The heavy lidded eyes similarly convey the contemplative serenity one associates with Buddhist imagery, while a narrow mustache grows outward from the subtly curved upper lip just above a handsomely shaped chin.

I John M. Rosenfield. The Dynastic Arts of the Kushans. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd. (1993), p. 1.

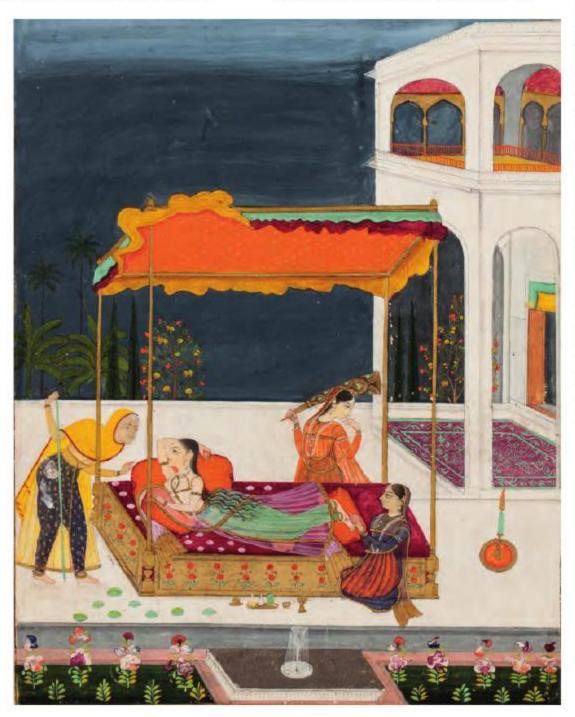


DOUBLE-SIDED LEAF WITH TWO RAGAMALA ILLUSTRATIONS

Opaque pigments heightened with gold and silver on paper India, Deccan, Hyderabad circa 1760

Image: 11 ¼ x 7 ¼ inches (28 x 18 cm) Folio: 14 ¼ x 10 ¼ inches (36 x 26 cm) In the classical Indian tradition of merging ragas with their visual representation, these two paintings form a pair of raginis. Ragas comprise the Ragamala, or the "Garland of Ragas", a series of melodies from classical Indian music.

Asavari ragini is a melancholic melody



customarily played in the early morning. The ragini derives its name from asi (snake) and ari (enemy) The ragini is usually illustrated with the image of a solitary dark-skinned woman dressed in a skirt of leaves or peacock feathers as she sits on a rock beneath a sandal tree. Disappointed in love, she consoles herself by playing the pungi, a reed instrument made from a gourd. Enchanted by her tune, the serpents gather before her. A bare-chested ascetic with his leg hooked around a tree looks on from behind. This figure is identified as Gorakhanatha, a celebrated male yogi who has given her the pungi for summoning the snakes before her.

Paired with the Asavari ragini, the second image of an unidentified ragini depicts a lady lying prone on her bed seemingly awaiting her lover. The tension of the painting is achieved by the efforts of her attendants to placate her before his arrival. They are shown here waiting on her, perfuming the soles of her feet, and generally mollifying her as an old woman appears to be bringing her news. The lush colors evince the sensual nature of the painting, and the princess, bare-chested, wears a long diaphanous skirt that trails along the richly appointed bed adorned with rose petals.



SHIVALINGA

Kundan gold cladding with ruby inlay and Basra pearls South India, Tamil Nadu Early 19th century Length: 2 ¼ inches (5.71 cm) Height: 1 ½ inches (3.8 cm) Provenance: Private Collection, Europe The Linga, the aniconic symbol of Shiva and the embodiment of the masculine energy of potentiality, is one of the most important and widespread religious images in Hinduism. Often depicted alongside or, as in the case of this exquisite example from South India, placed within a yoni. Together with the yoni,

a representation of the womb and the source of all life, they signify the creation of the universe.

Fashioned in gold and inlaid with rubies, this miniature depiction of a Linga and yoni is embellished with Basra pearls and adorned with images related to Shiva, including Nandi, Shiva's mount, a vibhuti, the horizontal lines of ash worn by Shaivites and a serpent, symbolizing kundalini, pure spiritual energy. A fully blossomed lotus rests atop the linga symbolizing the ultimate state of non-attachment achieved by followers of Tantric Shaivism.





RINGS IN THE FORM OF A SHIVALINGA AND NANDI

High-karat gold
South India, Tamil Nadu
Late 18th century
Shivalinga Ring Height: 1 ½ inches (3.8 cm)
Diameter: 1 inch (2.5 cm)
Nandi Ring Height: 1 6/8 inches (4.4 cm)
Diameter: ¾ inch (1.9 cm)

High-karat gold Fashioned out of gold, this delicately modeled ring depicting a Shivalinga, the abstract symbol Late 18th century of the Hindu deity Shiva, is believed to embody the energy of universal power.

Diameter: 1 inch (2.5 cm) A counterpart to the Shivalinga, this radiant gold ring depicting Nandi, the bullDiameter: ¾ inch (1.9 cm) mount of the God Shiva, is an auspicious symbol of divine protection.









A MAHARAJA ENTERTAINED BY A BUFFALO TOURNAMENT

Opaque pigments heightened with gold on paper A panoramic scene illustrates a celebratory Folio: 19 x 24 1/4 inches (48 x 62 cm) Provenance: Doris Wiener Gallery, New York

India, Udaipur buffalo tournament for the pleasure of the circa 18th century Maharaja. Exquisite details and refined naturalism define the painting, which exhibits a classical symmetry and warm shades and Charles W. Banta, New York colors. The detailing in the Maharaja's dress and that of his retinue is superb, while the rendering of the animals within the arena is characterized by elements of naturalism and whimsy. The spectators of the tournament create the effect of multiple perspectives and intersecting planes of activity within the geometric framing of the walled palace.



HEAD OF A BODHISATTVA

Grey schist This sensitively carved head of a Bodhisattva Ancient Gandhara region embodies the elegance of classical Gandharan circa 2nd - 3rd century art. The gentle bow-shaped mouth, slender Height: 7 1/2 inches (19 cm) moustache, tapered nose and heavy-lidded eyes create an expression of meditative serenity. An elaborate diadem resting atop his head highlights his noble ancestry.

> A Bodhisattva, one who postpones entering into Nirvana until all sentient beings cease to suffer, is one of the primary images in Mahayana Buddhism. The term Bodhisattva also refers to the historical Buddha Gautama prior to his enlightenment, and to all other beings destined to become Buddha's in the future.



STAMBHA

Ivory A civilization that flourished from the 4th century India, Chandraketugarh BC to the 2nd century AD, Chandraketugarh Shunga Period is celebrated for its prolific artistic tradition, circa and century BC most notably for intricately carved sculpture Height: 5 1/4 inches (13 cm) in terracotta, and occasionally, in bone and ivory. This remarkable Stambha, or cosmic column, depicts three earth goddesses, known as Yakshis, interspersed with raised florets. The Yakshi, an important symbol of fertility relating to both the human body and agriculture, is depicted as a voluptuous female, semi-clad in transparent skirts and adorned in jewelry.



THE ARMIES OF HANUMAN AND RAVANA DO BATTLE

Illustration from the "Shangri" Ramayana, Style III This stirring painting depicts a scene from Opaque pigments heightened with gold on paper the Lanka Kanda (battle of Lanka), in which

Folio: 12 ¼ x 8 inches (31 x 21 cm) the intense drama of battle.

India, Pahari Hanuman looks on while his army is locked Kulu or Bahu in battle with Ravana's demons. The dense circa 1700 - 1710 composition, vivid colors and wild action evince

> Pages from this dispersed series are in the collections of the British Museum, the Brooklyn Museum of Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Los Angeles County Museum, Cleveland Museum of Art and private collections.

For further reading see:

W.G. Archer, Indian Painting from the Punjab Hills, 1973 vol. 1, p 128, B.N. Goswamy and E. Fischer, Pahari Masters: Court Painters of Northern India, 2009, pp. 75-93.







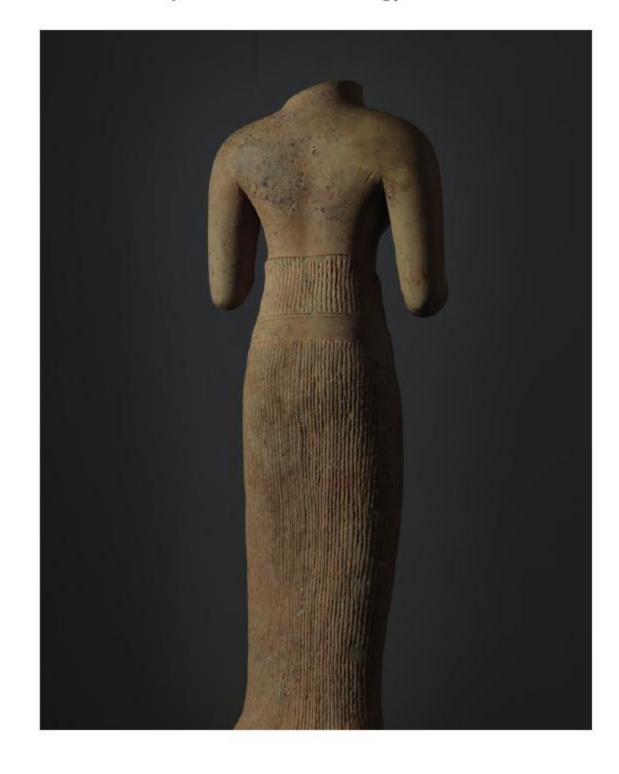
FEMALE TORSO

Height: 22 inches (56 cm) Provenance: Private Collection, USA Doris Wiener Gallery, New York

Polished sandstone The Baphuon period saw the flourishing of the Khmer, Angkor period arts in all of mainland Southeast Asia, and the Style of Baphuon Khmer achievements were unsurpassed in this circa 11th century regard. This sculpture reflects the refinement and maturity of the Khmer artists during the eleventh century.

This striking piece evokes all of the

finest attributes of classical Khmer art. The sensuous and generous curves that define the sculpture are reflected in the details of the decorative motif of the pleated sampot (skirt). The sculpture may be read both abstractly and figuratively, with a sense of corporality and softness in the gray sandstone.





HANUMAN PAYS HOMAGE TO RAMA AND SITA

Folio from a Dasavatara series Rama and Sita sit regally on an elaborate gold Opaque pigments heightened and silver throne. Rama's brother Lakshmana with gold and silver on paper fans them with a chauri composed of peacock India, Murshidabad, feathers. To the left, Hanuman, the Monkey circa 1765 - 1770 King, lies prone before them. In a lovely Folio: 14 x 11 inches (35 x 28.5 cm) flourish, his tail curls fancifully around the pole behind him. An offering of flowers and fruit is depicted in the foreground. The simple geometry of the painting with its rectangular planes and straight lines, and the elegant positioning of the divine couple contribute to the achievement of an effect which is at once peaceful and imbued with its religious import.

The reverse contains inscriptions in Persian and English: Rama wa sita – "The God Ram & the Goddess Seeta".







MALE TORSO

Sandstone This marvelous classical Indian sculpture India depicts a male deity in a sensuous tribhanga. circa 10th century In this three-bend pose, he stands adorned in Height: 16 1/2 inches (42 cm) jewels, with the hand of his consort resting Published: Nancy Wiener Gallery, 2009 lovingly on his right shoulder. Delicately Provenance: Private Collection, USA modeled, his supple body radiates sensuality and ease, creating a perfect marriage of naturalistic form with godly attributes.







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